

Pender County Natural Area Inventory

MOORES CREEK NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD Significant Natural Heritage Area

Site significance: statewide
Quadrangle: Currie

Size: 38 acres
Ownership: public

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES: Moores Creek National Battlefield natural area contains populations of seven plant species recognized as rare in North Carolina, including four Federal Species of Concern: Venus flytrap (*Dionaea muscipula*), Carolina bogmint (*Macbridea caroliniana*), Carolina grass-of-parnassus (*Parnassia caroliniana*), and spring-flowering goldenrod (*Solidago verna*). The population of Carolina bogmint is particularly significant. It is currently known from 18 sites globally, and the population at this site is the largest.

LANDSCAPE RELATIONSHIPS: This site is located in western Pender County along Moores Creek at Currie, within the boundaries of Moores Creek National Battlefield. It is connected by small stream floodplain southward to Lower Black River Swamp natural area, and from there to other significant areas in the Black River Floodplain Macrosite.

SITE DESCRIPTION: Moores Creek National Battlefield natural area includes disturbed seepage slope, wet meadow, and blackwater stream floodplain habitat. Use of the site dates back to before the Revolutionary War, and much of the original landscape has been altered for long periods. It is believed that the original habitat supported blackwater floodplain swamp and bottomland hardwood communities, with wet longleaf pine communities on adjacent flats and low slopes, and pocosin habitat between the pine communities and floodplain. Some disturbed Coastal Plain Small Stream Swamp (Blackwater Subtype) habitat persists, but bottomland hardwoods, pocosin, and wet longleaf pine communities are no longer present. However, local conditions in a large wet meadow and on an adjacent seepage slope continue to support a pine savanna flora with several rare species and carnivorous plants. The seepage slope is particularly critical, supporting five of the site's rare species, including Carolina bogmint. This slope also contains the only documented occurrence of small-leaved meadowrue (*Thalictrum macrostylum*) on the outer Coastal Plain of North Carolina south of Jones County.

No animal surveys were conducted at this site during the inventory. The stream floodplain provides important habitat for migratory songbirds and at least historically for black bear (*Ursus americanus*). Floodplain habitat also provides a narrow landscape connection southward to natural areas associated with Black River.

MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION: The National Park Service, which owns and operates Moores Creek National Battlefield, has begun a long-term project to restore the Pine Savanna community on the lower slope and meadow at the site. A drainage ditch has been blocked to restore natural hydrology, and fire will be used in place of mowing to maintain an open structure and favor the fire-adapted savanna plant association in the restoration area.